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Moscow Embassy Case

# Radiation Tests Kept Secret, Doctor Says

## The World

### Soviet Satellite Killer a Failure?

The Russians have suffered their third straight failure this year in testing a satellite-destroying system, U.S. intelligence sources report. The latest failure occurred July 21 when a Russian Hunter satellite failed to stay in orbit, the sources say.

According to U.S. specialists, the Hunter satellite was sent up to try to destroy Russia's Cosmos 839 satellite which had been lofted into orbit 12 days earlier.

American analysts say they do not know what is causing Russia such apparent technical problems. The Russian effort to develop an operational antisatellite system dates back about 10 years and has proceeded in fits and starts.

Associated Press

Special tests to detect genetic damage were run by the State Department on employees returning from Moscow during the 1960s because of concern over possible effects of microwave radiation being beamed at the U.S. Embassy there, according to doctors familiar with the study.

However, the purpose of the tests was kept secret from the employees, the medical sources said. American foreign service officers and other embassy personnel reportedly were told only that they were being checked for a kind of abnormal bacteria, the sources said.

The existence of the genetic testing program, conducted during about an 18-month period in 1967-68, was confirmed by Dr. Cecil B. Jacobson, who oversaw the analysis of the State Department test samples by a laboratory at George Washington University.

"THINGS WERE never really conclusive," Jacobson said about results of the tests.

However, a former colleague of Jacobson's, Dr. Thomas H. Gresinger, said he was told by Jacobson at the time of the testing program that the tests showed "funny results — lots of chromosome breaks."

Chromosomes are microscopic rodlike bodies within the nucleus of each cell, containing the basic genetic material DNA (deoxyribonucleic acid). When cells divide to reproduce, chromosomes go through certain regular patterns in replicating themselves. Abnormal chromosome breaks can lead to serious problems including birth defects in children.

Gresinger said he became aware of the tests while he was on the faculty of the George Washington Medical School and also doing gynecology work on a consulting basis for the State Department's medical division.

"Because I was at both places I realized they were running genetic studies on all the people from Moscow," he said.

GRESINGER noted that "the thing that bugged me about it was that they were telling the people from Moscow that they were not doing this . . . The people thought they were being tested for something equivalent to Montezuma's Revenge," referring to the diarrhea sometimes picked up by travelers in foreign countries.

Until last February, knowledge of the microwave problem was restricted to a handful of top officials.

Meanwhile, Sen. Bob Dole has disclosed that the radiation issue prompted President Ford to send a personal appeal to Soviet leader Leonid I. Brezhnev urging that the Soviets curtail their microwave bombardment of the embassy.

Dole, a Republican from Kansas, said he was told of the President's letter to Brezhnev during a closed-door briefing by Helmut Sonnenfeldt, one of Secretary of State Henry A. Kissinger's closest associates.

Following the Ford letter and U.S. diplomatic efforts to protest over the radiation, as well as an embassy staff meeting that led to widespread publicity, the Soviets reduced the microwave power levels. However, they have refused to completely cease the bombardment.